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March 12, 2020

Dear NMA Members and Friends:

Thank you for your commitment to the National Medical Association. As trusted physicians and other health care stakeholders, we continue to remain diligent in our quest to stay updated on the most recent, vetted and pertinent information regarding COVID-19 (coronavirus) so that we are prepared to effectively communicate with our patients and the public in an effort to keep them healthy and safe. The health, safety and well-being of our members, staff, presenters, speakers and sponsors is our utmost concern and our highest priority.

On March 11th, District of Columbia Mayor Muriel Bowser declared both a State of Emergency and a Public Health Emergency for the District of Columbia – where Colloquium was to be held. The Mayor has declared, “There is reasonable cause to believe that there is an imminent hazard of or actual occurrence of widespread exposure to an infectious agent (COVID-19) that poses a significant risk of substantial future harm to a large number of people in the District of Columbia.” Further, “the person-to-person spread of COVID-19 and the increased availability of testing kits make it virtually certain that the District of Columbia will have more confirmed cases and that COVID-19 will have significant impacts on District of Columbia residents, businesses, visitors, students, and at-risk populations.” Finally, “the spread of COVID-19 is an imminent threat to the health, safety, and welfare of District residents that requires emergency protective actions be undertaken by the District Government.”¹

In light of the growing number of COVID-19 cases across the United States and based on the latest guidance from public health officials, it is with deep regret that we have decided to cancel the 21st Annual Colloquium on African American Health and Capitol Hill Day of Advocacy, scheduled for March 27-30, 2020.

Because of the outbreak of COVID-19, our organization faces a decision with no other viable options. We know how much Colloquium means to everyone and we did not make this decision in haste. Our team, like many of you has been eagerly anticipating and preparing for this year’s Colloquium, but the ongoing spread of COVID-19 has been a serious concern for all of us and there is still so much we don’t know about this virus.

We appreciate your understanding and apologize for any inconvenience. This situation is rapidly evolving and we encourage you to please stay safe and exercise all precautions.

¹ Mayor’s Order 2020-046, March 11, 2020

If you booked your hotel through the NMA room block, NMA staff will be responsible for cancelling your reservations. If you booked your hotel independently, you will need to cancel your own reservations.

It is clear that this is a larger issue than our Colloquium. As noted, yesterday, the WHO declared a pandemic. The NMA recommends that you keep abreast of the latest developments by accessing the best clinical, epidemiologic and governmental sources of information. Resourceful websites include:

WHO - World Health Organization

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/summary.html>

John Hopkins University – website that tracks COVID-19:

<https://gisanddata.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6>

[Your local and state public health departments are excellent sources of information relevant to your geographic area.](#)

Thank again for your sincere and continued commitment to the NMA in this our 125th Anniversary year.

Sincerely,



Oliver T. Brooks, MD
President, National Medical Association